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POLAND: Religious Pilgrimage

Pilgrims from throughout Poland and Western Europe began traveling to the city of Czestochowa last week to commemorate the 600th anniversary of Poland's most sacred religious object, the icon of the Black Madonna. The number of participants could increase to more than 150,000 by the time major ceremonies are held at Czestochowa this weekend. Many of the pilgrims, who include large numbers of young people, could remain in the area for other major commemorative ceremonies on 26 August. [REDACTED]

Comment: The Church has a good record of preserving order at its public ceremonies, although there have been incidents after religious observances. It would like to maintain discipline, if only to show the government it still commands the loyalty and obedience of the population. Nonetheless, some may use the event--traditionally an occasion for nationalistic and emotional fervor--to express frustration over martial law and the delay of the Papal visit. [REDACTED]

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